

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

TRANSFER OF WARTIME REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMMAND AUTHORITY

by

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The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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ABSTRACT

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KEY TERMS: Transferring, Peacetime OPCON, ROK and U.S. Relationship, Future Expectation of Korean Peninsula.

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Since peacetime Operational Control (OPCON) of selected ROK Army forces was transferred from the United States to the Republic of Korea (ROK) Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in 1994, a more positive and equitable relationship has been developed between the ROK and U.S. militaries. Meanwhile, the United States has restructured its forces in Korea to cope with new challenges in the 21st Century through modernization, force reduction, and relocation of the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK). Likewise, the ROK military has improved its capability to conduct theater operations and its self defense capability by transforming. Since then, the ROK leadership has become convinced that it is necessary to transfer wartime, as well as peacetime (Armistice period), command authority to the ROK government. The ROK Government anticipates this transfer occurring within the near future with the extension of its political-military role.

This SRP reviews the background of the ROK-U.S. command relationship, identifies major regional security issues, and examines ongoing ROK-U.S. military policies, ways to minimize security threats, and vulnerabilities related to the transfer of wartime command authority. It concludes with a recommendation for appropriate command structures for the ROK-U.S. forces following the transfer of wartime command authority.

TRANSFER OF WARTIME REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMMAND AUTHORITY

ROK military will be reborn as the self-reliant forces both nominally and virtually, which will take the full responsibility ...

—The ROK President Roh Mu Hyun¹

Since the Korean War, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States have successfully deterred further armed conflict and managed numerous crises on the Korean peninsula, relying on the strong blood-relationship between the two countries. Also, they have made remarkable progress over several decades in the military area - conducting advanced military training and education, developing military doctrine and operational planning, and upgrading logistics and weapons systems. However, there have been conflicts and challenges between the two countries as well. One of these conflicts has involved issues surrounding the transfer of command authority.²

In 1994, peacetime (Armistice period) Operational Control (OPCON)³ of selected ROK Army Forces was transferred from the United States to the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Since then, a more positive and equitable relationship has developed between the ROK and U.S. militaries. The ROK now has the 11th largest economic Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the world. The current administration has initiated a program of self-defense, whereby South Korea will be able to fully counter the North Korean threat with purely domestic means within the next two decades. Through this process, the ROK military has already improved its capability to conduct theater operations and has strengthened the nation's self-defense capability through transformation.⁴ The ROK leadership believes that it is now necessary to transfer wartime command authority to the ROK government. The ROK Government envisions this transfer occurring within the near future as an expansion of its political-military role. Officially, the ROK and U.S. governments have agreed to desirable changes "modifying the command relationship" within the near future.

This SRP reviews the background of the command and control relations of our two armed forces for the last half century. It identifies major regional security issues and examines both ongoing ROK and U.S. military policies. It then suggests a new paradigm for regional security cooperation for peace and unification of the Korean peninsula. It recommends ways to minimize the security threats to the two allies and suggests a more appropriate and efficient command structure. It concludes with recommendations for the Korean military to develop and meet the wartime command authority requirements of the future.

Background of the ROK-U.S. Command and Control Relationship

The command and control relationship of the ROK military forces and the U.S. forces in Korea can be traced back to the height of the Korean War. In July 1950, immediately after the outbreak of the war, President Rhee Syung Man relinquished command authority over the Korean military and transferred it to the Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command (CINCUNC), the U.S.-led UN Command that helped the country repel invading communists from the North.⁵ The conflict ended in July 1953, when CINCUNC signed the Armistice Agreement on behalf of all UNC military forces. In 1957, the UNC headquarters moved from Tokyo to Korea, leaving a small UNC (Rear) headquarters to coordinate with the Japanese government. The Security Council resolutions pertaining to the UNC specify no termination date. Pending a permanent political settlement restoring "international peace and security," the United Nations Command remains in Korea. When the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC) was established in 1978, operational control of all ROK forces except several subordinate units of the Second ROK army, Capital Defense Command, and Special Operations Command were transferred to the Commander of the ROK-U.S. CFC, although the commander of the UN Command retained "directive authority" for Armistice matters.⁶ In 1994, the ROK JCS regained peacetime OPCON of selected ROK Army Forces. However, until now, the commander of the UN Command and the Commander of ROK-U.S. CFC have retained OPCON over the ROK military forces in war, or when the defense readiness condition (DEFCON) increases to level 3.⁷

Current Command Relationships in Korea

To understand the ROK-U.S. command relationships in Korea, it is necessary to comprehend the three organizations. Figure #1 depicts these very complicated interrelationships.

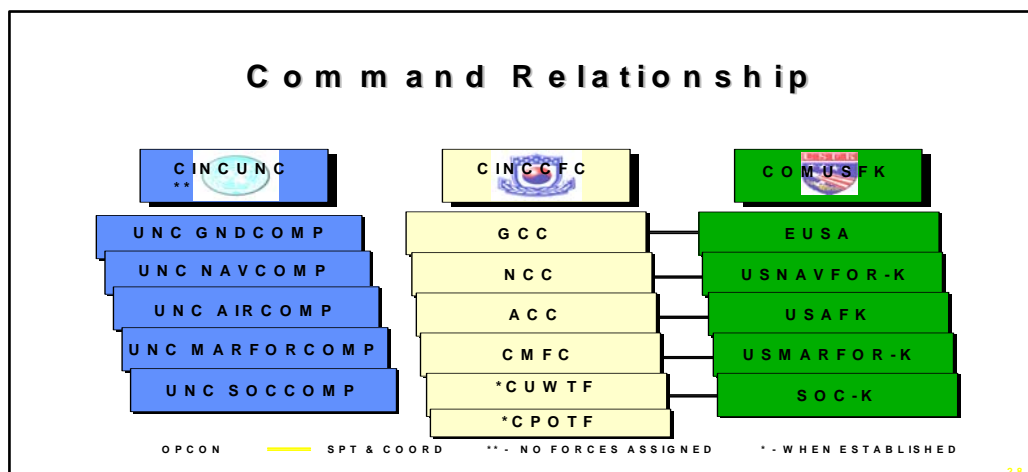


Figure 1.

These three primary organizations each have unique characteristics and command and control relationships-including command control, operational control, and tactical control⁸ of subordinate units during the armistice and during war.

The first organization is the United Nations Command (UNC). A U.S.-led multinational force, UNC was established in response to UN Security Council resolutions of 25 and 27 June and 7 July 1950. The 7 July resolution recommended UN states place their forces under a “unified command under the United States,” requested the United States to designate the commander, and authorized the command to fly the UN flag. The key United Nations Command elements are the UNC component of the Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) and its Secretariat. The commander of the UNC has the authority to exercise operational control of UN forces operating in Korea and retains directive authority for all matters involving the armistice. The UNC provides the command and control framework for any non-U.S. or ROK force contributions from UN member states in the event of war. Also, the UN-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) designates seven bases in Japan as UNC bases and allows basing and transit rights for forces of those nations (other than forces of the United States and Republic of Korea) who provided forces to the UNC during the war.⁹

The second organization is the bi-national war-fighting organization, the ROK–U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC) that was established in 1978. Its mission is to deter attack on South Korea and to defend the nation in the event of an attack.¹⁰ Both during the Armistice and in war, the ROK-U.S. CFC receives its strategic guidance from both the ROK and the U.S. National Command Military Authorities (NCMA) through the military committee. The CFC commander has the authority to control selected ROK Armed Forces in accordance with Combined Operational Delegated Authority (CODA) during peacetime; it gains operational control of the First and Third ROK Armies in wartime. CODA is the exercise of CFC’s daily armistice authority over the ROK forces. There are six delegated authorities:¹¹

- (1) combined crisis management for deterrence, defense and armistice compliance
- (2) deliberate planning
- (3) combined joint doctrine development
- (4) planning and conducting combined joint training and exercises
- (5) combined intelligence management
- (6) C4I interoperability-Command, Control, and Coordination

The third organization is United States Forces Korea (USFK). USFK is the only U.S. military organization operating at the theater level in Korea. The Commander of the U.S. Forces Korea (CDR-USFK) is a subordinate unified commander serving under the Commander of the

U.S. Pacific Commander (CDR USPACOM); CDR-USFK has command or OPCON of all U.S. forces in Korea. This organization provides the forces and supports the CFC commander. During war, U.S. augmentation forces are integrated into the appropriate commands in Korea. Third-Nation UN forces would be placed under Commander UNC OPCON and would coordinate their operations with Commander CFC. Commander CFC has the options of activating the troops and of organizing either joint, combined, or uni-service task forces as necessary to accomplish the mission. At DEFCON-3, designated ROK armed forces are placed under the operational control of Commander CFC. These forces will further fall under the operational control of the relevant component commanders. In fact, a single U.S. general officer heads the U.S. Forces Korea, the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command, and the U.N. Command. His tripartite role simplifies the otherwise complex command structure. Even though the peacetime operational control of ROK armed forces was transferred from the U.S. to the ROK JCS, wartime operational control of ROK Armed Forces still remains in the hands of this four-star U.S. Army general.

Regional Security Interests: North East Asia

Given its territorial situation, surrounded by strong countries such as China, Russia, and Japan, the Republic of Korea has been a key player and important strategic bridge between the Northeast Asian continental countries. Over the last half-century, the Northeast Asia region has seen dynamic changes and has generally seen no major war. But historical undercurrents of conflicts and conflicting national territorial interests have challenged regional security, even though they have recently abated considerably.¹² Pending hot issues such as Taiwan, North Korea's nuclear proliferation and military threat, China's military development, Japan's assertive diplomacy, the Korean peninsular situation, and other uncertainties will challenge Northeast Asia security.¹³ Indeed, it is unclear whether changing the command relationship will create a more conducive atmosphere between the ROK and the United States, or threaten the continual development of common security interests in the Northeast region. To avert an aggressive North Korean attack is the key factor to promote and to positively contribute to regional stability and security. This examination of the regional security picture begins with the perspectives and strategic interests of the region's nations.

North Korea

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), one of the world's most devastated countries, has failed to meet its ordinary people's basic needs for food and energy. Also, the militaristic regime of Kim Jong-il, the Chairman of the North Korean National Defense

Commission, has deteriorated. One remarkable characteristic of North Korea nowadays is that the ruling hierarchy has so far successfully kept the populace under its dictatorial control only within 300 km of Pyongyang.¹⁴ As shown in Figure #2, compared to South Korean troops, the North's 1,000,000 soldiers are a major supporting group that protects the Kim regime and threatens ROK security.

| Classification | South Korea | North Korea |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Army | 560,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Navy | 67,000 | 60,000 |
| Air Force | 63,000 | 110,000 |
| Tanks | 2,360 | 3,800 |
| Field Artillery Guns* | 5,180 | 12,500 |
| Surface combatants | 160 | 430 |
| Fighters & Special aircrafts | 580 | 870 |
| Reserve | 3,040,000 | 7,480,000** |

* Including rockets, guided weapons, and Multiple Launched Rocket System (MLRS).

** Includes Reserve Military Training Units, Worker/Peasant Red Guards, and Red Youth Guards.

Figure 2 South and North Korean Military Capabilities¹⁵

From Kim Jong-il's perspective, the national security of North Korea can be guaranteed by sustaining military superiority over South Korea. Thus, North Korea's threats with conventional military, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and long-range missiles are part of the strategy for the survival of Kim Jong-il's regime. If wartime command authority is transferred from the United States to the ROKG, North Korea will face new challenges, because North Korea has always claimed that the presence of United States forces is a major stumbling block and obstacle in the peace talks between the two Koreas and the United States. Thus, using this opportunity, they may call for the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean peninsula, or assurances that the United States will not attack North Korea. The ROKG and the United States must convince North Korea that transferring wartime command authority is not a prelude to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the peninsula. The ROKG should take advantage of transferring of wartime command authority as a way to strengthen its position to negotiate with North Korea by taking away the key issue of those who criticize the ROK for allowing the United States to exercise wartime control. The on-going Six-Party Talks (among the ROK, United States, Japan, China, and Russia) will be one of the methods to pressure and convince North Korea. These talks, and possible four-party talks involving the two Koreas, the United States,

and China, can provide a framework for the discussion and solution of North Korean and regional security issues.

China

The People's Republic of China (PRC) - a Communist nation - hosts one-quarter of the world's population (a billion people) and the world's largest Army. The PRC has a strong interest in the Korean peninsula and is North Korea's largest supporter. As an emerging global power, China's involvement is crucial to building regional security in the Asian-Pacific area. China will leverage its military and economic power in an effort to expand its role in the region. China is actively participating in the process of resolving the most serious security issues, particularly North Korean nuclear problems. Also, they have gradually increased their influence in the United Nations. For the past several years the PRC has been building up its military capabilities and currently has the capability to launch missile and air space attacks against the United States. Their space capability was demonstrated recently when they destroyed their own satellite. China may see an advantage in the transferring of wartime military command authority from the United States to the ROKG. China could perceive a benefit in two respects. One is its military advantage toward the Korean peninsula in war time. Because of its geographic location, China can support or send troops and monitor the North Korean situation. China will persist in keeping North Korea in its strategic orbit. China may believe that in a war conducted by the ROKG U.S. commitments will be limited compared to the pre-transfer period. But a strong ROK in control of its own forces will also be a deterrent to Chinese intervention. Another advantage is having a flexible option to deal with Northeast Asia issues such as Taiwan. For example, China might attack Taiwan at the same time that NK attacks the ROK, believing that the United States would then have to deal with both conflicts without initiatives in the Korea peninsula. However, the change of command relationship between the ROK and the United States will also provide more flexible forces in the region to deter and react to any circumstance in the Northeast Asian region, including Taiwan. With such a flexible military capability, the United States can take a more proactive role in its dealings with the PRC to resolve regional security problems. The important challenge will be to insure that China recognizes that the new command structure is symbolic of the strength, not the weakness, of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

Japan

The traditional Japanese view of the geopolitical importance of the Korean Peninsula is often explained by describing Korea as a dagger pointed toward Japan. This view leads the Japanese to prefer the status quo on the Korean issue. However, historically Korea has never

sought to invade Japan. But Japan has invaded Korea several times over the centuries, most recently in 1905. Japan occupied the country for 36 years, until the end of World War II, after which Korea was divided. The current disputes over Tokdo/Takeshima Island, as well as the controversy over the Japanese textbooks and war memories more generally, reflect underlying differences between Korea and Japan. These differences must be resolved before relations between the two countries can become friendly and stable, thereby transcending the long-term generally hostile relationship.

Japan is strengthening its military power and has increased its involvement in the security issues of the Northeast region. Japan's Self Defense Forces are also increasing their interoperability with the U.S. forces in Japan in an effort to create a unified command.¹⁶ Depending on changes in the command relationship between the ROK and U.S. forces, Japan may call for an end to the UN-Japan SOFA, if so, the mission of the UN rear command would end, the seven supporting bases located in Japan would no longer be UNC bases, and the non-U.S. forces (such as those of Australia, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United Kingdom) could no longer be based in or transit freely through Japan.¹⁷ Therefore, even if the command relationship in Korea changes, the UNC must be maintained so that the role of UNC (Rear) Headquarters and the seven bases in Japan will continue for the effective support of wartime operations in Korea.

United States

The ROK-U.S. alliance¹⁸ should be the central component of U.S. policy in Northeast Asia. The U.S.-ROK alliance represents a "friendship cemented in blood" marked by memories of shared sacrifices. The United States has restructured its forces in Korea to address new challenges in the 21st Century through reduction in the size of those forces and the relocation of the 2nd Infantry Division and the USFK Headquarters¹⁹ within the framework of its Global Defense Posture Review (GPR).²⁰ About 32,500 U.S. troops were stationed in South Korea as a deterrent against threats from the North, but the numbers are scheduled to decline to about 24,500 by 2008 as part of Washington's worldwide redeployment of its forces.²¹

Stability in Northeast Asia depends on the interrelationships among the countries in the region. The Northeast Asian countries have their own interests, and those interests are too complicated to achieve complete consensus on most issues. To meet on-going and emergent security challenges, the United States and Northeast Asian countries can obtain their security policy objectives most efficiently in the region by crafting a new relationship with Korea - particularly by changing the command authority. This new relationship will be enhanced by the

transfer of wartime command authority because a self-confident Republic of Korea in control of its own forces can play a more positive role in creating an international atmosphere conducive to peace on the Korean peninsula and helping to maintain the balance of power among neighboring countries.²² It will assure the region that the United States is not using the ROK military forces as a surrogate military force in the region.

Ongoing ROK-U.S. military policies

The critical challenge of the ROK-U.S. relationship came in the winter of 2002-03, when tens of thousands of Koreans participated in candlelight vigils calling for U.S. accountability in the deaths of two schoolgirls accidentally killed by a U.S. military vehicle. This public reaction was evidence of a broader sense of unease and ambivalence about Korea's relationship with the United States, and especially about the U.S. military presence. The ROK and the United States have several pending issues to solve, such as relocation of U.S. bases from major cities in Korea, the transferring of command authority over the ROK Armed Forces, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), military weapons procurements related to ROK-U.S. readiness, and other political and economical problems. A comprehensive agreement and burden-sharing spirit will include tentative solutions to these pending issues and proposals for practical programs to be implemented gradually. These efforts need more time, but in-depth and detailed negotiations can lead to positive solutions.

U.S. Military Policies

The United States officially agreed to return to the ROKG wartime operational command over ROK Armed Forces during the ROK-U.S. 33rd Security Consultative Meetings (SCM) held in Seoul in October 2005 and again in Washington in October 2006. The United States proposes to transfer wartime operational command in 2009, but the ROK Army announced that it would take place in 2012, after improving and enhancing the ROK Armed Forces' ability to achieve a self-defense capability through modernization. Meanwhile the United States will have relocated 35 U.S. bases scattered across the nation into two hub bases by 2008 as part of a global U.S. troop realignment. The primary focus of the USFK mission is to fight and win decisively.²³ In the event of a war-time command authority transfer to the ROKG, new ROK-U.S. relationships, based on the vision of a future ROK-US. alliance, will be established. More challenges and on-going issues can then be faced. In addition, the transfer will prepare the way for a new relationship between the United States and the DPRK, along with structural changes in U.S.-Japanese relations. The United States wants to place some flexible forces in the region to react to any circumstance in the Northeast Asian region in ways consistent with U.S.

interests.²⁴ Continued U.S. support in transferring command authority will strengthen the ROK's international standing and provide the self-confidence and international respect that are essential for the ROK to play a positive role in the region.

ROK Military Policies

The ROK policy toward the United States will not be significantly different from the past relationship. Strong trends in Korean society require this transfer of wartime command authority, particularly since, on 15 August 2004, president Roh urged transfer of wartime authority to the nation as part of *JaJu-GukBang*, Korea's Program of "Self-reliant Defense".²⁵ Bilateral relations between the Republic of Korea and the United States have been promoted under the leadership of Presidents Roh Mu hyun and G.W. Bush. The ROK will endeavor to enhance the relationship between the two countries, seeking more balance and greater reciprocity. While in agreement with the United States about the desirability of reduced visibility and smaller footprint of U.S. forces after yielding wartime command authority, the ROK Army has announced that there should be adequate preparation and appropriate procedures to get the wartime command authority back, especially since most intelligence on North Korea comes from the United States.

ROK President Roh observed during the commemoration ceremony, "the ROK military will be reborn as the self-reliant forces both nominally and virtually, which will take the full responsibility of the security of the Korean Peninsula by having the Wartime Operational Control." He then declared that the Republic of Korea should have a firm national defense posture to guarantee peace and accept greater responsibility for its own defense. He pledged to enhance the nation's military capability and to develop an independent self-defense capability through modernization.

It will be a compatible structure in which the ROK will command the ROK military and the United States will command U.S. forces. It will not be a unilateral command structure but only a mutual, cooperative structure. Thus, it will be the similar concept as holding joint military operations.²⁶

The ROKG has announced that it has formulated a detailed plan internally and indicated that they now need full negotiations between the ROKG and the U.S. government to consummate the transfer of war time command authority to the ROKG.

Conditions for Transferring of Wartime Command Authority

With only peacetime operational authority over its forces, Korea cannot be called a truly sovereign nation because the wartime command authority reverts to the ROK-U.S. Combined

Forces Command. But a process is now underway to restore the ROK's full military sovereignty. It is a welcome development. Korea should have wartime command authority over its military. However, before wartime command authority is transferred to the ROKG, several conditions should first be met. National Security Advisor Kwon Chin-ho has announced concrete plans for regaining the wartime control. He said, "The government position is that we can do it as soon as possible if these conditions are met." He then identified these necessary conditions:²⁷

(1) Maintain a strong relationship between the ROK and United States; reduce anti-American sentiment.

(2) Strengthen the self-reliant defense of the ROK forces; have more self-assertive military doctrine and military capabilities by retaining more independence in military operations.

(3) Increase coalition efforts to bolster cooperation from the neighboring countries, particularly China.

(4) Initiate mutual confidence-building processes to manage hostilities and arms control with North Korea.

Future Command Structures for the ROK–U.S. forces

The ROK Army has its own characteristics and command climate. The ROK Army has developed good leadership, weapon systems, and programs to increase its military power to benefit the nation in the future. The ultimate goal of the army is to sustain a posture of combat readiness and power to win on the battlefield. To win on the battlefield, the forces need combat capabilities that are suitable, feasible, and flexible. Therefore, it is very hard to say which types of units and structures are necessary for a strong and powerful army. In this SRP, to clarify my point of view, I use the term "Wartime Command Authority." This term represents command control, tactical control, and coordination authority including ROK military forces (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air force), U.S. forces, and UN augmentation forces in Korea. Thus "wartime command authority" does not refer specifically to control of ROK Armed Forces in the Korean peninsula during wartime. It pertains particularly to command authority of U.S. forces and UN forces to avoid further conflicts and ambiguous multinational relationships with UN, U.S. forces in Korea, and ROK forces. This analysis focuses on broader, long-term, future-oriented concepts of the command relationship with U.S. forces and UN forces operating in the Korean Theater.

Having clarified the term and calling on my experience as a ROK Army officer, I will now suggest a more appropriate and efficient command structure for the ROK–U.S. forces in Korea

in peace and wartime. This ROK–U.S. combined forces structure should be tailored for theater employment with a focused strategic headquarters, modeled on the CFC structure, and organized through mutual agreement. This organization would receive strategic direction from the ROK and U.S. Military Committees, it would be headed by a ROK general during both wartime and peacetime, and it would be a combatant command. For the conduct of combined and joint military operations, or in case of an emergency operation, it will be task-organized using both ROK and U.S. forces from each service. The CFC Commander would be a ROK four-star general. He would exercise command authority, but each ally would maintain operational control of its own troops. The ROK general would be dual-hatted as both CFC and UNC commander. A U.S. three-star general would be the deputy CFC commander and would have control of all U.S. forces in Korea. He would serve as deputy CFC commander, senior U.S. military representative, and USFK commander. In peacetime, both countries would have their own command authority. But in wartime they would maintain one chain of command and control. The CFC Commander would have authority to control the U.S troops and employ all assets to execute the missions as required during the war, to include deployment of UN forces that augment the CFC forces in Korea.

To conduct effective coordination between the ROK and U.S. forces, the ROK Army would establish a combat liaison team and the ROKG would establish a separate interagency coordination team within the CFC command. These provisions would supplement and complement existing national procedures to provide effective command and control within the CFC structure. Also, the command relationships are intended to optimize CFC unity of effort without compromising the participation of UN forces during the war.

Establishment of this structure is a task for the near future that will inevitably call for military transformation. To assume a leading role in this restructuring, Korea must have wartime operational command. Following the transfer of wartime command authority, U.S. forces in Korea will have a significantly different relationship with their Korean allies. Even so, this new wartime command authority should enhance the ROK-U.S. relationship, regional security, and the ability of both nations to achieve their strategic objectives.

Challenges for the Future Korean Army

To be able to execute the wartime command authority required for the future, the ROK Army must increase its capabilities and develop a strong and balanced armed force. This role would contribute significantly to the long-term goal of ROK Army self-reliant defense.

It is obvious that without considerable U.S. military presence, regional peace and security would be jeopardized. A USFK presence is the most efficient means to maintain the peace and balance of power. Even so, in order to deter aggression and maintain the peace, the ROK Army must overcome certain environmental and domestic challenges.

Environmental Challenges

The most serious challenges or risks come from the threats of an invasion or attack from North Korea. The first challenge is to deter a North Korean attack. War is not a game, nor an exercise; it determines the fate of the country. We can never repair and recover those killed and maimed in combat. Decision-makers who have experience on the battlefield have a great responsibility for the war.

Second, the ROK-U.S. forces face new challenges of a changed strategic environment. They are currently challenged to manage change within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment. It will be more and more complex and diverse than in any other past era. We do not know what will happen in the very uncertain and unclear situation on the battlefield. Therefore, to deal with the changes in modern warfare, which is marked by opportunities and threats, more fundamental and profound concepts and approaches are required for both ROK and U.S. forces.

The third challenge is the new circumstances of the ROK and U.S. forces. The United States is trying to change the character of its forces in Korea to be a more flexible force that can be deployed throughout Northeast Asia. The U.S. wants to build a more capable global force structure, so it will continue to work toward “effective, relevant, agile, and sustained to meet the challenges of the 21st century security environment.”²⁸ Some military experts have said that if the Korean forces take over operational control from the United States, the USFK will be slashed drastically. Further, we cannot expect any great increase in their number in wartime. Perhaps the current defense posture will transform into a parallel arrangement, whereby Korea controls its armed forces and the United States its own - the end of combined forces. Either case would mean a decisive change in the USFK, the pillar of our national security. In particular, with the transfer of wartime command authority, any change in the combined command structure should be planned and implemented in this broader context.

The fourth challenge is reforming of ROK armed force structure and developing the technology based forces. ROK Army has developed “Army Vision,” reflecting the changed Army operating environment to include the National Defense Reform 2020 based on the Army Vision 2025.²⁹ The ROKG and ROK Armed Forces continue reforming and innovation to accomplish

its mission and develop capabilities for planning, executing of diplomatic, information, military and economic (DIME) implementation so that they can rely on their own capabilities in the Korean theater during wartime.

Domestic Challenges

Enhancing Theater Operation Planning and Training Ability

The ROK JCS needs to have a theater planning capability to secure the Korean Peninsula. Currently, the ROK JCS operation plan (OPLAN) is integrated into the United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command OPLAN. If war breaks out on the Korean Peninsula, the ROK must bear major responsibility and decisively win on the battlefield. In addition to developing its planning ability, the ROK JCS needs to establish systems, processes, and doctrines to achieve victory, whether in peace or war. The ROK JCS and the future CFC (as a combatant command) have a great responsibility to conduct combined and joint operations and to train the forces.

Develop Vision and Strategic Leadership

As strategic leaders, future ROK generals should provide the vision and the concepts. They must institutionalize a strategy to implement the vision, including the selection and mentoring of subordinate leaders to carry on the strategic vision. They face a volatile strategic situation and need to develop critical competencies at the strategic level; set the long-term direction for the organization; and develop the ability of the commander to achieve his vision and accomplish effectively the task at hand by working with coalitions, interagencies, and all services, to achieve solutions that all participants can support.

Develop Decision Making System

These skills are critical for the future of the ROK Armed forces, which like the U.S. Army, is entering the post- transformation era. Further, the strategic environment of the Korean Peninsula is becoming more and more challenging. The ROK Army must adopt the most advanced technology to enable commanders to make the best future battlefield decisions. They must not only capitalize on the new technology but must also integrate this new technology into their Army.

Understand the Global Strategic Environment

To conduct missions and coordinate with the U.S. Army, ROK military leaders need to learn more about the U.S. Army's structure and policies. They must understand the global

strategic environment that will impact greatly on the future ROK Armed Forces. As senior ROK leaders who can deal with and solve the ROK-U.S. global security problems, they will enhance and broaden their understanding about ROK-U.S. political issues, the national security of both countries, and military strategy based on global and regional problems.

Conclusions

There is no reason for unnecessarily delaying the transfer of wartime command authority to the ROKG. The tide of Korean public opinion can not be reversed. Regaining wartime command authority would enhance ROK confidence, power, and regional influence and provide a balance of power with its neighboring countries. This would go a long way toward the achievement of long-term stability in the region and would serve as the basis for establishing a healthy U.S.-Korean alliance for the 21st century. However, both the ROK and the United States should act deliberately. For example, U.S. policy makers mistakenly abandoned the Korean Peninsula after WWII. This led to the Korean War and caused a devastating loss of ROK and U.S. forces defending Korea. The bottom line is that without a common understanding and joint preparation by both the ROK and the United States and a clear roadmap for returning wartime command authority to Korea, any policy will fail.

The ROK and United States must deter war. To deter war, the ROK and United States should maintain sufficient force levels to deter and to defeat North Korean aggression. The ROK Armed force must pay attention to North Korea's conventional threat and posture its forces to deter war through a self-reliant defense policy. The ROKG must convince Kim Jong-il that nuclear weapons and hollow threats will not work to assure security of his regime. Further, the ROKG must continuously reassure him that the Republic of Korea will actively respond to any aggressive action from North Korea after the transfer of command authority. Also, the ROKG must simultaneously seek to guarantee the security of the North Korea people. In the end, the security of the ROK and a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula will contribute significantly to overall Northeast Asian security and stability.

Endnotes

¹ ROK President Roh Mu Hyun's remarks during the 1 October 2005 Armed Forces Day commemoration ceremony. Seoul: Office of the President, 2005.

² "Command Authority" includes all aspects of military operation, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the mission. Joint Publication 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, Washington: GPO, 2001, pp.Chapter111-4.

³ Operational Control (OPCON) is command authority to organize and employ forces, assign tasks, designate objectives, and give authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. It does not involve direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal reorganization of a nation's units, or unit training. *Ibid*, pp.111-7~8.

⁴ The ROK Army was formerly organized into three armies: the First Army (FROKA), Second Army (SROKA), and Third Army (TROKA), each with its own headquarters, corps, and divisions. The Third Army was responsible for the defense of the capital as well as the western section of the DMZ. The First Army was responsible for the defense of the eastern section of the DMZ, whereas the SROKA was responsible for rear area security. Under a restructuring plan aimed at reducing redundancy, Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) will be reorganized into the Ground Operations Command (GOC) which combines FROKA and TROKA while the Second ROK Army is converted into the Rear Operations Command (ROC).

⁵ Delegation of Command Authority over ROK Forces assigned to General MacArthur "command authority over all land, sea, and air forces of the Republic of Korea during the period of the continuation of the present state of hostilities", ROK President Rhee's Official Letter to the U.S Embassy, July 14, 1950.

⁶ The CFC was established on November 7, 1978 according to Strategic Directive No.1 of the first ROK-US Military Committee Meeting (MCM). CFC has OPCON of GCC, NCC and ACC.

⁷ Mutual Defense Treaty (1953.10.1), ROK Ministry of National Defense (MND), *A Study of ROK/US Military Relationships and Operational Control Authority*, Seoul: MND, 1990, pp. 56-59.

⁸ Tactical Control (TACON) is command authority limited to detailed control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish assigned missions or tasks. Joint Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), pp.111-8.

⁹ Donald W. Boose, Jr. "United Nations Command", Spencer C. Tucker, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Korean War*, New York: ABC Clío, 2000. When Japan regained sovereignty in 1952, the United States and Japan exchanged notes governing Japanese support of UN actions. This was formalized on 19 February 1954 when Japan, the United States "acting as the Unified Command," and eight of the participating states signed a UNC-Japan SOFA providing for access, transit, and basing rights. Eventually, seven U.S. bases in Japan were designated as UNC bases.

¹⁰ Globalsecurity.org, "US Forces, Korea / Combined Forces Command Combined Ground Component Command (GCC)". Available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/usfk.htm>, accessed on November 23, 2006.

¹¹ Combined Operational Delegated Authority (CODA). This term outlines CFC's daily Armistice period authority over the ROK forces while preserving the ROK command of its forces on a day-to-day basis. CODA is a term agreed upon by the two nations that reflects the peacetime measures required for unity in combined efforts. Available from <<http://www2.apan-info.net/mnfsop/SOP/B3.DOC>>. Internet; accessed on November 31, 2006.

¹² The unresolved conflicts between Russia and Japan involve the so-called Northern Territories, conflict between China and Japan involves the Senkaku Islands.

¹³ Defense News.com, January 16, 2007, "Abe says assertive Japan no threat to neighbors" Available from <http://www.defensenews.com/story>, accessed on January 16, 2007.

¹⁴ The Military-First Policy is based on such multiple objectives as ensuring the maintenance of the regime, consolidating military power and spreading preferential treatment for the military and a spirit of revolution to the entire society. The ROK *Defense White Paper*, Seoul: MND, 2004.

¹⁵ The ROK *Defense White Paper*, Seoul: MND, 2002.

¹⁶ Defense News.com, January 16, 2007, "Abe says assertive Japan no threat to neighbors." Available from <http://www.defensenews.com/story>, accessed on January 16, 2007.

¹⁷ Article XXIV of the UN-Japan SOFA says that "All the United Nations forces shall be withdrawn from Japan within ninety days after the date by which all the United Nations forces shall have been withdrawn from Korea." Agreement Regarding the Status of the United Nations Forces in Japan, February 1954, text available at <http://www.austlii.org/au/other/dfat/treaties/1954/9.html>, accessed on January 15, 2007.

¹⁸ An alliance is a result of formal agreements between two or more nations for broad, long-term objectives. Joint Publication 3-0, *Operations*, Washington: GPO, pp.15.

¹⁹ Through the ROK-US Summit Talks on May 15, 2003, and Defense Ministers' talks on June 27, 2003, the ROK and United States agreed to the basic principle of USFK's transformation.

²⁰ Global Posture Review, available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/08/mil-040816-dod02.htm> accessed on January 16, 2007.

²¹ During the first phase, by the end of 2004, 5,000 troops including the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division and some units which had transferred their missions to ROK forces were reduced. During the second phase in 2005-2006, 5,000 personnel were withdrawn. An additional 2,500 personnel will be withdrawn during the third phase from 2007 to 2008. *Defense White Paper 2005*, Seoul: MND, 2005, pp.111.

²² *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington DC: The White House, September 2002, pp. 26.

²³ *Stars and Stripes*, Internet Home Page Available from <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=26426&archive=true>, accessed on October 25, 2006.

²⁴ *Digital Chosun*, January 22, 2006, "An End to Korea-US Wrangling Over Strategic Flexibility?" Available from <http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200601/200601200037.html>, accessed on November 22, 2006.

²⁵ ROK President Roh Mu Hyun's remarks during the Independence Day on 15 August, 2004, inauguration speech, Seoul: office of the president, 2004.

²⁶ Armed Forces Day speech on 1 October, 2005.

²⁷ National Security Advisor Kwon Chin-ho announced *Armed Forces Day*, on 1 October, 2005.

²⁸ Department of the Army Field Manual, *The Army*, Washington: GPO, June 2005, pp. 4-6.

²⁹ Republic of Korean army, *Army vision*, March, 2007

